



PITTSFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT BERKSHIRE COUNTY SRT

November 1, 2011

TO: Chief Michael Wynn / Pittsfield Police Department
Lieutenant Michael Winston / Berkshire County SRT Team Commander

FROM: Officer Matthew Kirchner / Berkshire County SRT Team Sniper / Operator

RE: Equipment Proposal

The purpose of this proposal is to request funding for a multi-use Emergency Response Unit rescue vehicle for the Berkshire County Special Response Team (Berkshire County SRT), utilizing monies to be funded through the XXXXXXXX Grant for the State of Massachusetts. Presently the Berkshire County SRT consists of 25 team members who include supervisors, commanders, and patrol officers from the Pittsfield Police Department as well as officers from the Lenox, Lee, Great Barrington, Dalton, and North Adams Police Departments. The Berkshire County SRT is a county wide Special Response Team with a base of operations via the Pittsfield Police Department. Currently the Team is relied upon to respond to a variety of situations located in Berkshire County. All of them by their nature are dangerous and life threatening. Our team works in cooperation with officers and firefighters from our regional HazMat Team and Fire Services based out of the Pittsfield Fire Department Headquarters. We are also assisted by EMT's and Medics with County Ambulance Services who provides EMS services within Berkshire County. The Special Response Team is also in a position to support and protect other responders in the Chemical Biological Radioactive Nuclear Explosive (CBRNE) field. (State Police Bomb Team personnel, Federal Personnel, etc.) who may be called upon to respond to such an incident such as Weapons of Mass Destruction and/or Terrorist attacks.

The Berkshire County area as well as the areas surrounding Berkshire County (Hampden County, Hampshire County, Franklin County, Etc.) currently faces a previously unimaginable threat from terrorist activities. In April 2000, the Centers for Disease Control published its report, Biological and Chemical Terrorism: Strategic Plan for Preparedness and Response. This report concluded that the United States was vulnerable to chemical and bio-terrorism acts. Based on information provided by the U.S. Government, continued attacks are imminent and certain. Local government officials are challenged to provide initial and secondary responses for large-scale catastrophes and attacks on crucial infrastructure, schools, government buildings, strategic businesses, as well as large public gatherings. There will be an urgent and necessary need to provide a coordinated method of safely inserting emergency personnel into hostile environments to allow the evacuation and treatment of numerous injured people.

The Berkshire County / Western Massachusetts area itself presents a unique target environment for any terrorist group planning a potential attack. The following is a summary of possible threats:

Of the 32 Cities and towns located in Berkshire County, 20 operate without a fully functioning or full-service police department. These agencies are particularly dependent on the Berkshire County SRT for response to emergencies that would involve a WMD or Terrorist attack in our Region. Our response will be paramount in effecting any kind of resolution before the incident spirals and compounds out of control. It is expected that, when an event occurs, these departments will be relying heavily upon the resources of the Berkshire County SRT for assistance in its resolution, and certainly there is tacit agreement that we will do so. It is therefore critical that our personnel be equipped properly to deal safely with these events when they occur.

Currently, law enforcement and E.M.S. seldom train together. They may work side by side in emergencies, but rarely cross train. Fortunately we are lucky in our region to have forward thinking personnel and we have been able to train in conjunction with members of the County Ambulance Service as well as the Pittsfield Fire Department to specifically deal with providing EMS care while in a "Hot Zone". These trained personnel understand the need and reason for an Emergency Response Rescue Vehicle specifically designed to operate in these hostile and life threatening environments. Neither law enforcement nor E.M.S. are capable of handling a situation like this without assistance from the other. E.M.S. will rely on law enforcement to assess, protect and clear the area, while the police rely on E.M.S. to treat and evacuate the injured. Nationwide there has been significant progress with police tactical response teams integrating medical personnel in their training and responses to crisis.

Police administrators have recognized the value of immediate medical assistance and the reduced liability in adding E.M.S. trained personnel to their tactical response teams. Some teams have trained their police personnel to become paramedics – E.M.T.'s, while others have taken E.M.S. people and integrated them into their tactical response teams. These Tactical Paramedics and E.M.T.'s carry their own medical provisions and equipment while responding with the tactical response teams. Tactical Paramedics and E.M.T.'s are trained to provide immediate care under adverse conditions. They train directly with the officers and become an integral part of the "Team". This integrated, self-sufficient "Team" provides coordinated, safe, immediate response to emergencies. We are fortunate that within our "Team" are two dedicated and trained Emergency Room Doctors. Both Doctors are employed with our regional hospital (Berkshire Medical Center) and understand the danger and dedication needed for their role to be safe and effective. They both have made this tremendous commitment to our community.

Existing tactical teams with paramedics and EMT's can be used to provide emergency evacuation and treatment when Weapons of Mass Destruction / Mass Causality conditions exist. Their extensive training and experience would be put to use as part of a self-sufficient Emergency Response Unit. This tactical response/rescue team would also include special weapons personnel capable of extraction and rescue in hostile situations within minutes of activation.

Due to the remoteness of Berkshire County Massachusetts and the proactive police work put forth by the Western Massachusetts Chiefs of Police, we are able to work together as a regional team to provide coverage for our communities. Our team is responsible for assisting the 32 Cities and Towns that make up Berkshire County. Berkshire County is approximately 946.27 Square Miles. Berkshire County is the fourth Largest County in all of Massachusetts. The next closest Regional Team to the Western part of our state is the CEMLEC team. The CEMLEC Team is comprised of approximately 45 different police agencies in and around the Worcester County Area. For the CEMLEC team to respond with a properly equipped vehicle to assist our team in an extreme emergency would be detrimental to our communities due to the extreme distance they would need to travel and the time to assemble and make this journey.

Because of this, the Berkshire County SRT Team has researched existing "Specialized Response and Rescue Vehicles" which would make our response possible to such dangerous events. We currently possess a 2001 Freightliner FL60 Chassis based- up armored truck. Our vehicle has several deficiencies. First, our current truck is not able to withstand improvised explosive devices (IED) or vehicle borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED) and continue to carry out its designated mission. Our vehicle also does not possess "run flat" tires that in the event were compromised by firearms or other tire deflation devices would make the current truck a "sitting duck" for more attacks. The current truck is extremely heavy and is only two wheel drive thus limiting the places it can be driven. This vehicle has left us stranded in the mud and snow that we see all too often here in the Berkshires. Additionally, because of its extremely large size, it greatly limits the places we can feasibly take it without getting stuck during high risk missions, rescues or evacuations.

As things stand now our team would be responding in departmental vehicles. Currently we primarily operate a 2001 Ford Expedition and a 2005 Chevrolet Silverado extended cab pickup truck. When these vehicles don't prove to meet our mission needs we have also resorted to rental vehicles or personally owned vehicles belonging to members of the Berkshire County SRT Team. On past

operations and when our current armored truck has been out of service for various reasons we have resorted to renting Budget / U-haul type rental box trucks to transport tactical operators to and from the "hot zone". All of these vehicles mentioned are general-purpose vehicles without armor that offer little or no protection for responding personnel against explosions or projectiles, or any other hazard that may be found at such a site. This critical factor would make targeting and potentially eliminating responding personnel a relatively simple affair. Therefore, those persons who have the training and expertise to absolutely resolve or effectively deal with a WMD/CBRNE event are put at the greatest risk before they are able to deploy and may, in fact, be eliminated before any cohesive response can be formulated.

The type of vehicle needed would be capable of deploying special weapons personnel, EMS personnel, HazMat Personnel and/or Robots. specially equipped to detect chemical, biological, and radiological materials as well as explosive gases. The vehicle also needs armor properties to protect these personnel from explosions and hits from multiple projectiles when required to enter "hot zones".

The Lenco "BearCat" meets all these requirements. The "BearCat" is a new vehicle based on a 2012 Ford F-550 four wheel drive chassis. The Bear Cat has a 15-20 year useful life expectancy. The vehicles power and design are such that it can effectively respond to virtually any location in any weather or climate. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] vehicle is an open box design, with a crew compartment for 10 fully equipped team members. The "BearCat" will come equipped to accept the department's radio communication system. Seating is along both sides of the rear compartment, all equipped with seat belts. There is a roof mounted rescue hatch with an emergency portal accessible from inside the cargo compartment to the roof. This area also offers projectile protection, and is railed, in case deployment from a height is necessary to resolve an incident. Inside the vehicle compartment there is a power inverter to facilitate the use of a lap-top computer, battery chargers, or any applicable electrical or electronic device. There is sufficient room in the cargo area for storage of equipment and items necessary for specialized response and rescue. For the many other technical specifications of this vehicle, reference should be made to the attachment from the Lenco Company.

The "BearCat" can be used in several roles at any incident site: as a protective/covered command post, mobile command unit, transport to and from bomb zones, hazmat hot zones, hazmat incidents, negotiators unit, rescue unit for citizens and law-enforcement personnel from the site, and in the deployment of less lethal munitions.

Our new "BearCat" should have a multi-agency radio communications system installed. This would provide incident command with direct communications to the responding response/rescue teams throughout the area. These radios would be capable of communicating directly with public safety personnel not only in the Berkshire County SRT response area, but throughout the region and would specifically include all special operations frequencies within the state as well. This would allow the

vehicle to function seamlessly in complex emergency situations and provide for a variety of roles to include a forward mobile command center.

Our Current Vehicle has served our team well but lacks many major improvements of what the BearCat would offer. While this is a very important piece of equipment, the last couple of years have demonstrated some serious flaws to this aged vehicle. It is approximately 11 years old and has been out of service more the last three years than it has been available and ready. It is often in need of repairs. Because of these repairs it is sometime not available for immediate deployment in serious situations. It is our opinion that this will continue and it has become a major safety concern of the officers and supervisors on our team. It is difficult to navigate in traffic and slow to deploy from one location to the other. Due to the large size of our current vehicle we must store it at an off-site location rather than in a City owned location. Due to this poor storage arrangement it takes officers an extended amount of time to get to the storage location. Once at the storage facility Officers must be escorted by a security guard to the truck, to pick up and make the truck ready for service. Our current truck is extremely noisy due to its large commercial vehicle sized Mercedes Diesel Engine and this excessive noise renders the current truck inoperable on high risk search warrants and drug/narcotics raids where the element of surprise is needed. The gun ports on our current truck are early design type and are held closed by a small latch from the inside of the vehicle. One well placed rifle round would easily defeat this latching system, thus rendering the gun port useless and it would remain open with no way to secure it closed. Essentially all subsequent gun fire put through this open port would then "Ping pong" around inside the passenger compartment of the truck potentially injuring or killing passengers inside. Our current truck has very limited visibility because of smaller windows. These smaller windows are past their useful service life and I have been informed by the manufacturer of the "Ballistic Glass" windows that due to their age, and the fact that they are currently "Delaminating" from age, causing them to become hazy and difficult to see through, that the manufacturer will no longer guarantee the "Ballistic" properties of these windows and that all of the glass in our current vehicle should be replaced. This replacement would be extremely expensive and would still leave us with a vehicle that does not fit our operational needs.

Lenco Armored Vehicles is the sole source location for the "BearCat". From my research it is the only commercially available and in-production vehicle that meets our listed needs. Other vehicles made from composite materials become compromised on the first impact from a ballistic object. In other words, they cannot withstand multiple hits from explosions or gunfire, and will need expensive retrofitting if impacted. Other competitors make heavy tracked vehicles that are not appropriate to an urban setting. We have selected the Lenco "BearCat" over other vehicles because it is a wheeled vehicle made of appropriate materials; it has greater and more useful passenger capacity and is equipped with the desired detection equipment. The "BearCat" would be small enough to fit into our city garage at the station but large enough to accomplish all of the necessary tasks for our team. The "BearCat" is available on GSA pricing.

On most critical incident activations, primary intelligence reveals that the responsible party has access to firearms and other weapons. It is common for members of the community that we serve to possess high powered rifles that can defeat our current vehicle's existing ballistic glass protection. Many of the suspects that we deal with are armed with rifles with scopes, hunting weapons, and not to be forgotten, assault weapons. By nature of the SRT mission, we are called to resolve the event and at some point, required to evacuate nearby residents and effect rescues of trapped or isolated officers. Having a "BearCat" will afford greater protection than our existing vehicle.

Internally we have discussed maintenance issues with our fleet mechanic. Our fleet mechanic advised me that due to the large size and complex nature of our current truck he is unable to perform almost all of the necessary service work to keep this truck alive. This outsourcing of our service work usually results in extended service times, enormous repair bills, and the truck being unavailable when needed most. In speaking with our fleet mechanic he advised that he is very familiar with the Ford F-550 Chassis system and engine and that he would be able to perform most, if not all of the necessary service work and maintenance needed in house.

Lastly, I ask that you review the attached price quote issued from Lenco relating to a multi-agency purchase of five Lenco "BearCat" vehicles for use throughout the State. All five of these vehicles will be equipped the same and would mirror each other. This would allow for any tactical operator throughout the commonwealth to effectively operate within the same safe environment no matter the location of the emergency.

I have personally reviewed the price quote provided by Lenco and along with all of the additional "No Charge" items being added to each vehicle I find that this multi-vehicle purchase would be a substantial savings for our state and a would offer significant improvements in providing the best possible safety and quality of life for our citizens.

In closing, I have spoken with representatives of the New Hampshire State Police, the New York State Police, the Massachusetts State Police, and the Los Angeles Police Department regarding their evaluation of this vehicle, which has been used for incident response by their agencies. Without question, they have complimented its reliability and its effectiveness in response and rescue roles, and have applauded and avow its ability to protect responding personnel and the public when such an unfortunate event unfolds. Therefore I ask that the Berkshire County Special Response Team should be provided with a current modern, hardened rescue vehicle to enhance our capabilities and further enhance and protect the lives of our citizens in Berkshire County and the Western Massachusetts Region.

Should you have any questions, or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Respectfully,

Officer Matthew Kirchner
Pittsfield Police Department
Berkshire County SRT Sniper / Operator